

MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF SERVICE TO THE BLIND & VISUALLY IMPAIRED
DECEMBER 8, 2006
PIERRE, SD

Members Present: Rita Weber, Ed Pinkman, Sue Birrenkott, Steve Kelsey, Larry Wheeting, Gayle Aamold, Dennis White Shield, Dave Miller, Wesley Scholl, Keith Bundy, Gaye Mattke, Pat Czerny, and Mike Klimisch. Members Absent: Kyle Kircher and Angie Boddicker. Others Present: Jeff Kisecker, Eric Weiss, Sandy Neyhart, and Becky Blume.

Rita Weber, Chair, called the meeting to order. The agenda for the meeting was approved. The minutes from the October 6, 2006 meeting were also approved.

Annual Report: Eric Weiss is preparing the Annual Report to the Governor and Rehabilitation Services Administration Acting Commissioner. A draft copy was provided to Board members for review prior to the meeting. Revisions from last year's report include a success story from the Aberdeen Mayor's committee regarding Larry Wheeting, the consumer satisfaction survey results were removed, BEP information was added, a summary of the CCTV lease program was added, the Strategic Planning and Policy Committee was added into the Board section of the report, and Radio Talking Book (RTB) information was also added.

Other changes for this year's report include printing on the front and back of pages and the report will be printed on white paper to improve contrast. A text only version will be available on the SBVI website.

The cover for the report was also discussed. The options were a picture of the Capitol building in the SD outline with snow, the SD quarter, and Mt. Rushmore in the SD outline. Eric is unsure at this time whether or not we can use the state quarter. Positive comments were received about the Capitol building with snow. Eric

also mentioned having a logo contest to come up with a logo for SBVI and the possibility of Board members being judges.

Dave Miller suggested putting more substance in the cover letter or doing an Executive Summary. Gaye will work on an Executive Summary. Dave suggested that the summary be an analysis of what the numbers in the report mean. Other comments included the success stories are a great contribution to the report, the DSU computer class mentioned in the report did not take place this year but was planned and will be conducted again in 2007, and the wording in the transition week section does not match the numbers served at the rehab center (this was because transition week was held at the SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired in 2006). It was suggested that the division collect more specific information on the cause of blindness to demonstrate trends to be included in the annual report. Eric will work with the data collection system to ascertain whether the suggested information can be gathered. Another suggestion was to delete the cause of blindness chart and replace it with an age range graph. This suggestion was implemented in the final report. There were a couple of questions regarding the Benefit Cost Ratio. Eric explained the formula and offered a handout for those wanting more information.

Visions Newsletter: Gaye shared that she is interested in re-implementing the newsletter due to comments by Board members at the October meeting. She is planning to distribute the newsletter bi-annually in January and July. Large print will be the default format and it will be available online. Braille will be available if requested. Ideas for the newsletter included: employee and board member bios, peer support group activities, technology information, other areas of government (e.g. Flu epidemic, Medicare Part D, scams).

Board Representative Update:

121 Project: Dennis White Shield gave an update on the 121 Project in Pine Ridge. He is trying to conduct outreach to locate blind and visually impaired people that need services. Transportation and resources are limited and people have a hard time getting to the office. Dennis reported that the 121 Project in Pine Ridge did a

public service announcement on disabilities as a commercial for CSD. They asked deaf individuals to come forward and talk to CSD. Part of the commercial was translated to the Lakota language. The Native American 121 projects do not have the networking like the state and CSD. They get referrals from clinics, Indian Health Services, etc. Dennis is interested in working with the Division of SBVI to conduct more outreach activities for those residing on the Reservation.

Parent Connection: The director submitted a grant proposal for a family to family health care information center which would assist those dealing with special health care needs. They are waiting to hear on that grant.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC): Pat Czerny reported that the SILC has not met since the last Board meeting. Their next meeting is scheduled for December 12th and 13th. The SILC work plan for 2006-07 is on the agenda for discussion at that meeting. The Centers for Independent Living are struggling to serve people with available funding.

DakotaLink: Pat reported that DakotaLink received a grant from the Department of Education to purchase assistive technology for the loaner program. Students and adults will be able to borrow the devices to try before schools or individuals have to purchase the items. Pat has ordered a large inventory of assistive technology devices for blindness.

National Federation of the Blind (NFB): According to the American Printing House, Braille prices are expected to go down. NFB has talked with the makers of hybrid cars about safety issues due to the inability of blind individuals to hear the cars in traffic. Karen Mayry passed away but there is no date yet on a memorial service. Information on arrangements will be shared when available.

The Sioux Falls Library has the American Heritage Children's Dictionary in Braille and is interested in giving it away. If you know someone who is interested they may contact Deb at the downtown

library in Sioux Falls- she is in the audio/visual section. NFB is having a fundraiser to help purchase a game for the School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The Ponderosa Chapter of the NFB did not participate in candy wreath sales this year, but they intend to make and sell the wreaths for a fund raiser again next year.

South Dakota Association of the Blind (SDAB): SDAB is in the process for finalizing resolutions discussed at the convention. Hybrid cars are also an issue for SDAB. They are also raising money to help purchase a game for the School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. SDAB has scheduled a work day in Sioux Falls to modify and update their brochure.

Secretary Hofer: Secretary Jerry Hofer joined the Board meeting for introductions. He has been with the Department of Human Services since April and has had extensive experience in state government prior to his appointment. Board members introduced themselves to Secretary Hofer. Secretary Hofer responded to inquiries regarding SBVI's status as a separate Division stating that at this time he does not have plans to combine DRS and SBVI. He stated that he feels the Department is going in a positive direction. He has enjoyed interaction with consumers and individuals served by DHS. Waiting lists are an important issue at the department level.

Strategic Planning and Policy Development Committee: Rita, Kyle, Steve and Larry are on this committee and have met by conference call two times since the last meeting. The committee is currently working on updating and refining the goals to better guide the division's future priorities. Some of the goals were removed while others were added and some reworded. After the goals are finalized, they will work on strategies for obtaining the goals. It was suggested to reword Goal #2 as it is not a measurable goal. Goal #3 should also be reworded with blind and visually impaired listed first with other disabilities listed after that. Comments that there should be a goal relative to Assistive Technology and a goal regarding staff education were received and discussed. The Committee will meet again in early February to work on the revisions to the goals and to link the goals to strategies. Time will be set aside at the next Board

meeting for the whole Board to discuss and work on Goals and Strategies. Drafts will be provided prior to the Board meeting. It was also suggested to send the goals to staff for their input.

Focus Groups: The Board recommended that proposals be obtained to conduct focus groups as part of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment. Gaye received two proposals in response to a request from the Division for focus groups to be conducted with consumers. Feedback from the Board included that the EdVentures proposal would likely result in a better product but also was approximately \$5000 more than Dr. Davis' proposal. The strengths of Dr. Davis' proposal included his knowledge of vocational rehabilitation and expertise of the federal regulations. The EdVentures proposal demonstrated experience specifically with conducting focus groups. Some cost saving areas may be to use an SBVI staff person to assist rather than pay \$25 per hour for an assistant as stipulated in the EdVentures proposed budget.

It was commented that if cost is an issue go with Dr. Davis and SDSU and have them revise the proposal, but if cost is not an issue, contract with EdVentures and address the cost issues in the proposal. Other comments regarding the proposals were that Dr. Davis may have too much knowledge of RSA and if we are going to do it, do it right the first time and use a professional who has done focus groups before. Possible locations in the proposals included Aberdeen, Rapid City, and Sioux Falls. It was suggested that SBVI offer to pay for drivers and mileage to cover expenses of those attending.

Discussion was held about who to invite to the focus groups. It was suggested to send out invitations to the past 2 years of successful vocational rehabilitation closures and the first 30 to respond will be on Focus Groups (10 in each group). It was suggested that focus group members should be made up of all closures, not just successful closures, and also that the groups should be gender-balanced. However, if consumers are included who are not successful closures, then the person may not know how to answer some of the questions, (i.e. how did the first week of work go?).

There was discussion on equal opportunity to participate- public meetings are the public's opportunity to express their opinions, but focus group participants are chosen by those conducting the focus group to give meaningful input based on their specific experience.

Larry Wheeting made a motion that staff research contracting with EdVentures, addressing the issue of reducing costs. Sue Birrenkott seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Gaye said staff and the consultant will work on information for Focus Groups with a goal of having the groups completed by the end of February. The final report will be presented to the Board by the consultant at the April Board meeting.

Public Meetings: The past couple of years, a public meeting has been held in conjunction with the NFB convention in Pierre. The Board previously suggested that one public meeting be held at the Rehab Center in Sioux Falls on an annual basis. Board members facilitate the meetings regardless of location. It was suggested that notification of the dates and locations of the public meetings be included in the Visions newsletter.

It was suggested to have a public meeting in conjunction with a Board meeting in Sioux Falls. Gayle Aamold made a motion to conduct one public meeting in conjunction with the NFB convention in Pierre in April and another public meeting in conjunction with a Board meeting in Sioux Falls in April. Keith Bundy seconded the motion. Motion carried.

RSA Section 107 Monitoring Review: The draft report stated that SBVI did not meet Standard 2 which deals with closing less than 100 minority cases. This was corrected for the final report by responding with activities related to services for minorities in place in SBVI resulting in meeting Standard 2 for the final report.

RSA will be doing an on-site review in June of 2007. Most of the work will be done prior to their visit. Up to five RSA representatives will be coming from Washington D.C. for the review. Sue Rankin-

White, RSA liaison, has asked for Strategic Planning and Policy Development Committee information and may sit in on a conference call to address this area and the board's role. One-third of the states were chosen to have on-site reviews this year.

Business Enterprise Program (BEP): The BEP has given up some sites in the last year including: the Minnehaha County Courthouse, Career Center and Law Enforcement Center in Sioux Falls. The equipment was redistributed to other sites. BEP still hasn't found anyone to take over management of the Aberdeen Federal Building site. Amy Chappelle is managing from Pierre. Gross sales for the program were \$775,000, with net sales of \$130,000.

Independent Living Program (IL): Sandy Neyhart has been working with Eric to put data from the IL program in the annual report. According to a consumer satisfaction survey, twenty-one percent of respondents had considered moving to a nursing home prior to receiving services but decided not to go into nursing homes after receiving services. Of the 502 people served, 359 were female and 143 were male. Macular degeneration was the primary cause of vision loss of those served.

Areas covered by the Rehab Teachers have been reassigned since the rehabilitation counselor position in Pierre is vacant. This position has been covering an independent living caseload in Hughes and Stanley counties.

Sandy has been keeping track of the remaining rehabilitation teacher's caseload in the Rapid City area. She does not have a waiting list, but there is no time for outreach. It is not possible for her to see all active consumers on a monthly basis, as dictated by program policy, due to the large territory and caseload size.

There is no longer a waiting list for the CCTV program. There are currently 150 units in the program with 2 units available for new referrals. Rehab Teachers are taking a more active role in assessments and distribution of CCTV's.

Vocational Rehabilitation: There are four reports submitted to RSA on an annual basis. These reports include RSA-113 which is the vocational rehabilitation case load report, RSA-911 which is a detailed report that includes data related to services and demographic information, the RSA-722 is the due process report, and the RSA-2 which includes financial data.

Arin Dosch has resigned her position as counselor in the Pierre office. This position was advertised and closed on December 5th. At time of meeting, Eric had not seen a list of potential candidates.

Eric has decided to bring counselors in to conduct case file reviews. In the past, he has primarily conducted reviews himself, but believes that counselor participation will be beneficial for him and the counselors.

Summer Transition Week: Sue reported that transition week will be the last week of July at the Rehab Center. Ardell Fiedler has been working on the program with intentions that it be personalized for each student's vocational interests. Gaye told the Board that Dick Cole has offered to promote the vending program including a tour of the BEP site at the EROS Data Center. Beep ball was suggested as a recreational opportunity and as a means for students to meet adult mentors who are blind. Dick Cole and Dave Miller have agreed to work on organizing a beep ball team of former players to compete with those participating in transition week.

PR Committee: The PR Committee opted not to nominate anyone for the Governor's Awards recognizing employment of people with disabilities. They drafted letters of support for Julaine Arient-Rollman's nomination for public personnel and Pat Czerny's nomination for exemplary service. The committee had discussed nominating DSU for the computer course for screen reader users but Keith Bundy said there was not enough time to pull it together.

Director's Comments: The budget request for SBVI was included in the Governor's recommended budget address with no changes. Gaye has not heard of any bills pertaining to blindness being

considered for the upcoming legislative session. Session opens on January 9th at noon. The Legislative Research Council site is a good resource to track all matters related to session. The site is: <http://legis.state.sd.us/index.aspx>.

There is not much new in federal legislation including the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act. Congress breaks for recess soon and reconvenes on January 4th with the new Congress. The WIA bill will reappear in the Senate. House Bill 27 will be completely rewritten. Senator Kennedy is the Chair for the Senate HELP committee.

Medicaid Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD) is the new title for Medicaid Buy-In. Information was shared pertaining to eligibility for the program. The MAWD program is accepting referrals. If you know of someone who may benefit from MAWD, contact Eric to discuss.

Disability Awareness Day is scheduled for February 15, 2007 at the Capitol. It is an opportunity to educate legislators about disabilities. A Board sponsored table could include representation from the Board, SD Association of the Blind and National Federation of the Blind of SD. Larry Wheeting made a motion to sponsor a table if representatives from NFB and SDAB would be available to participate. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Gaye offered to forward information to the organizations to ascertain their interest in participation. Gayle Aamold offered to represent the Board if transportation arrangements can be made. A full table will be reserved for \$120 if all organizations are interested in sending representatives.

The Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) Dakota Chapter conference will be held April 2, 3, and 4 in Aberdeen. The conference will include sessions designed for professionals who work with individuals who are blind or visually impaired in a variety of settings. Board members are invited to attend.

Mid-Winter is scheduled for March 5, 6, and 7 in Pierre. This is the annual Vocational Rehabilitation conference that is held in conjunction with the Governor's Awards Luncheon recognizing employment of people with disabilities (Tuesday, March 6th). Board members are welcome to attend.

At the October meeting, Rita and Gaye agreed to check on arrangements for attending the Council of State Administrator's of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) conferences in San Francisco, CA. Plans for attendance were cancelled due to exorbitant costs. The Spring conferences for the two organizations are scheduled April 22-25 for CSAVR and April 26-28 for NCSAB in Bethesda, MD. Gaye will work with Rita for arrangements to participate in the sessions planned this spring and meet with the states congressional delegation, if possible.

The next Board meeting will be held April 13, 2007, in Sioux Falls at the SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind. The Strategic Planning Committee meeting and public meeting will be held in Sioux Falls on Thursday, April 12th.

Dave Miller made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Pat Czerny seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.